



POLICY BRIEF | HB 1369 SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Floridians' hard-earned tax dollars shouldn't fund professional sports stadiums that make wealthy sports team owners richer while doing little for the local economy. **HB 1369** takes a proactive step toward ending this practice.

HB 1369 (Pigman) SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: ends a stadium funding program that earmarks taxpayer dollars to subsidize professional sports facilities and requires sports franchises to pay outstanding debts on stadiums they no longer use.

- Taxpayer-funded sports stadiums in Florida are a losing bet for local economies. Deals like the one Miami-Dade made to build Marlins Park can leave cities and counties paying billions for facilities that do little to boost the economy, and help make rich sports team owners richer.¹
- Since opening, attendance numbers at Marlins Park games have consistently ranked at the bottom across the National League. The economic boost the city expected to see from the park never materialized.²
- Requests to fund a new soccer stadium in Orlando and improvements at TIAA Bank Field (formerly EverBank Field) in Jacksonville, Daytona International Speedway, and Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens have all failed to obtain funding from the state program. Despite this, the facilities were built as they were intended, but with private dollars – thus proving financial incentives from the state are entirely unnecessary.³
- In their book, "Sports, Jobs, and Taxes," Roger Noll and Andrew Zimbalist analyze stadium investments. In all cases, they find a new sports facility to have extremely small, or negative, effects on overall economic activity and employment. Furthermore, they were unable to find any facilities that had a reasonable return on investment.⁴
- In a 2017 poll, 8 in 10 economists surveyed agreed that the benefits of professional sports stadiums likely don't outweigh the costs to taxpayers.⁵
- HB 1369 would free up the \$13 million a year that is currently set aside for stadium work – funds that could go to more worthy causes that put hardworking Floridians ahead of sports team owners.

A comprehensive taxpayer-protection bill, HB 1369:

- Frees up sales-tax dollars currently set aside for building and improving professional sports stadiums for more worthwhile uses.
- Prohibits the use of revenues from tourist-development or convention-development taxes to construct or finance new sports-franchise facility projects.
- Removes local governments' authority to spend half-cent sales tax revenues on new stadium projects and motorsports complexes.

Please refer to [bill text](#) and staff analysis for further information.

¹ Via MarketWatch article, available at <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/miami-overpaid-for-the-site-of-baseballs-all-star-game-by-26-billion-2017-07-10>

² Via Wall Street Journal, available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/marlins-havent-brought-economic-boost-to-miamis-little-havana-1493160267>

³ Via News Service of Florida, available at <https://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/news/2019/02/12/florida-stadiums-strike-out-on-state-money.html>

⁴ Noll, Roger G. and Zimbalist, Andrew, eds. Sports, Jobs, and Taxes: The Economic Impact of Sports Teams and Stadiums. Brookings Institution Press, 1997.

⁵ Responses are weighted by each expert's confidence. See IGM Forum. "Sports Stadiums." January 31, 2017; <http://www.igmchicago.org/surveys/sports-stadiums>. 11 Noll, Roger G. and Zimbalist, Andrew, eds. Sports, Jobs, and Taxes: The Economic